(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Preference of private schools to Government schools

1442.SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government schools are dysfunctional and chaotic, the parents prefer to send their children to private schools and the children in the 6-14 age group are joining private schools, rather than those run by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the teacher absenteeism in Government schools ranges from 20 to 57 per cent in different States and the country's investment in education has increased with failed delivery system; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government to improve the quality of education in Government schools?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, being implemented in partnership with the States, seeks *inter-alia* to improve the quality of education in elementary schools through several interventions which, *inter-alia,* include recruitment of 9.09 lakhs additional teachers to improve the pupil teacher ratio, in-service training of teachers for a period of 20 days every year, distribution of free text-books for primary and upper primary classes, remedial teaching for weaker students, regular academic support through Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centers (CRCs) and monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes. As per an independent study conducted in the academic year 2006, the absence rate in 20 States was 18.3% and 19.5% for primary and upper primary schools, respectively. As per data of 2007-08 published under District Information System for Education (DISE) 81.6 % of total enrolment in classes I - VIII is in Government and Government aided schools.

Redesign of National Literacy Mission

1443.SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has redesigned the National Literacy Mission to check relapse into illiteracy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the target set under the National Literacy Mission during the last few years has been achieved;

(d) if so, to what extent; and

(e) the extent to which redesigning of the Mission is going to achieve the objective of full literacy in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The number of persons made literate during the last five years is as follows:

Year	No. of persons made Literate (in lakhs)
2002-03	61.33
2003-04	79.45
2004-05	39.74
2005-06	42.93
2006-07	23.04

(e) Does not arise.

Seats reserved for SCs and STs

1444.SHRI AMBETH RAJAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a number of seats reserved for SC/ST students are not yet filled in IITs and other universities;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when Government is going to fill up all the reserved seats?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Candidates belonging to SC/ST categories are admitted on the basis of relaxed criteria as compared to General category candidates. In the event of the reserved seats remaining unfilled, IIT candidates are admitted to one-year Preparatory Course on further relaxation of qualifying criteria. Due to infrastructural constraints, no preparatory course admission could be made in the six new IITs in 2008-09. Similarly, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has a special scheme, namely, Remedial Coaching for SC/ST students to improve their academic skills and linguistic proficiency and to raise the level of comprehension of basic subjects so as to provide them a stronger foundation for further academic work.

Special mid-day meals in backward areas

1445.MS. MABEL REBELLO:
SHRI B. J. PANDA:
Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has drawn up plans for special mid-day meals during summer vacations in primary schools in most backward areas, where drought situation might develop, if monsoon fails;

(b) if so, the details thereof, *inter alia,* indicating the pockets in Orissa and Jharkhand where such arrangements are proposed to be made; and